

REMARKS

Upon a *BOOK* lately published

BY

Dr. *WILL. SHERLOCK*

Dean of *St. Pauls*, &c.

ENTITLED

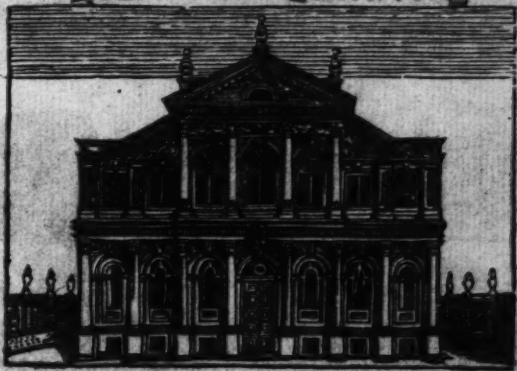
A

MODEST EXAMINATION

OF THE

*Oxford Decree, &c.*

[Jonathan Edwards]



O X F O R D,

Printed at the THEATER, MDCXCV.

And are to be Sold by *H. Clements*.



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UPON THE  
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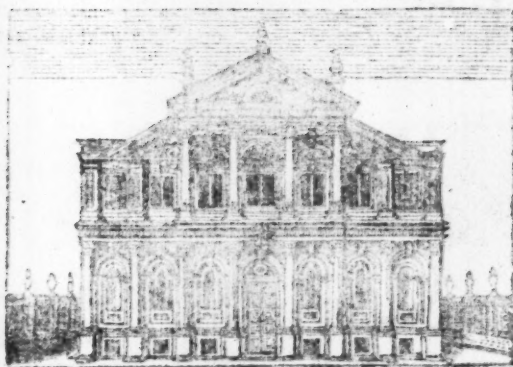
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REFLECTIONS  
ON THE  
LATE EXAMINATION  
OF THE  
*Oxford Decree.*

A *Modest examination of the Oxford Decree*; So the Dean begins his Book: But the whole Book, and almost every page in it, is a very plain and effectual confutation of the Title; in which you will find as little modesty in this censure of the *Decree*, as there is foundness and truth in the propositions which are condemned by it. The former is just as *decent* as the latter are *Orthodox*, and they may each of them be thus called by the same figure, which is commonly known by the name of *Antiphrasis*; as some say *Parce* are so called *à non parcendo*.

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But the Dean is to be excused, if any excuse may be framed from long use and custome, which have rendred such a way of contradicting himself habitual, and that habit is turned almost into a second nature.

I shall readily therefore acknowledge, (and let him take what advantage he pleases of that confession) that there is as great an harmony between this Title and the Book, as there is between the severall parts of this, and and some others of his late discourses. Upon which account I have sometime bin induced to think, that a man could not reasonably desire to encounter a fairer Antagonist than the Dean, who will save his Adversary the pains and trouble of confuting him; he will do it so often and so effectually himself.

It hath long since bin made an observation, that when men have once cast away the Faith, they at the same time make shipwrack of a sound and discerning judgment; being oftentimes, as a just punishment of their pride and vanity, delivered up *εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν*, to a mind which cannot rightly judge of, and distinguish the natures of things. One would almost be tempted to imagine, that some such thing hath overtaken this Dean, who as he doth not make a right difference, in some points of great importance, between *truth and falshood*: so in these papers he seems to have

have lost all distinction between *reason and sophistry*; between *arrogance and Modesty*. For if this be a modest vindication of his Opinions, then we have lost the true signification of words.

But perhaps he will come off, and relieve himself, as he doth upon some other occasions, by his *meaning*. It is true indeed, if you will judge of things by the letter and words of his book, he hath treated the Governors of the University with great insolence and contempt; but yet still he *meant* nothing but fairness and respect towards them; and therefore in spite of what can be said to the contrary, his discourse shall still be called a *Modest examination*.

I am loath to part with this word, because if I do, I must bid a final adieu to it, and never expect to find any thing again like it, at least in this book. If any man therefore who at present hath a good opinion of this Dean's modesty, hath a mind likewise to continue in it, then I must tell him, if he meets with this *examination*, he must be content to read but a few pages; nay that is too much; *Titulo debet, aut si placet, Titulis contentus esse*. He must be satisfied to read only the Title of the book, or at most the Titles of the Author; which are enough in all reason. And indeed before this trifling paper, he hath prefixed so many of them, as if he had a mind to oppress those

by his *puissance*, whom he despaired to subdue by his *reasons*.

It is true indeed, they are all of them (not now to enquire into his merits) such as he hath reason to be proud of: But however it will not become him to swell and look too big: for I must tell him, tho these Titles, may give him a place above some of the Heads of Houses; yet neither will they, nor twice as many more put together, render him equal to all, or the major part of them when met together. He cannot be offended then if I put him in mind of the *frog in the Fable*: he knows the story, it will become him to make the application; or if he will not, some body else would do well to whisper him in the ear, and advise him, *ne te inflas, ne intumesceas*, Decane, *non si te ruperis par eris*.

And now from the Preface, I proceed to the Book. But before I come to consider his examination of the Decree, there are certain passages and expressions, here and there dispersed in these papers, which must not slightly and disrespectfully be passed over, but call for our notice and observation.

And the first thing I am to take notice of is, the manner how he treats the *Oxford Decree*, and the persons who made and published it. The Decree he styles *rash and injudicious*, the *rash*  
and



*and hasty judgment of some Heads, p. 10. which Heads he all a long by way of contempt calls these Heads, Decreeing, Heresy-making Heads, p. 46. who in their determinations, have not only opposed the common faith of Christians, but acted likewise in opposition to the common sense of mankind. Of them he farther saith, that they talk of the Fathers and Councils, but are wholly ignorant of those matters, of which they have no knowledge, except it be by inspiration or prophesy. And in short, this ignorance and inconsideration hath betrayed them into a belief, and declaration of what is at the same time both Heresy and nonsense; and for which, not only all learned men, but even the most illiterate plowmen, whom he makes competent judges of these matters, will condemn them.*

I shall consider first what he saith of the *Decreeing Heads*, and then of the *Decree* its self. Now as to what concerns the Heads of the University, I believe there is no indifferent stander-by, that is, no man who is not perfectly of this Dean's *complexion and interest*, but will acknowledge that he hath treated them in a very rude, and unbecoming manner. He ought to have considered who were present at this meeting, and to have made some distinction at least. Among them he ought in the first place to have

thought upon the *Vicechancellor*, who presided in this meeting, and not over-hastily to have passed his Censure, without a *salva reverentia*, a preface of respect, which is due to his place and Character. For he should be put in mind of, what now perhaps by reason of his long absence from the University he may have almost forgotten, that the *Vicechancellor* of this, as also of our Sister University, upon the account of the greatness of his Trust, and the condition and quality of the persons under his Government, hath bin always thought to deserve a place, and hath accordingly bin ranked, with the chiefest Magistrates, and Officers of Corporations in the Kingdom. Upon which account he hath bin wont to be treated with Honor and respect by all persons of good manners, and civil behaviour.

Besides *him*, among the persons who composed that meeting, (as his friends who gave him an account of what passed there, might, and I suppose did inform him) there were two more, one whereof upon the account of his noble birth, and the other of his Character and Station in the Church, deserved to have bin distinguished. But he without any restriction or qualification, jumbles and shakes all these Heads together, and represents them to the World, as a Company of *indiscreet, ignorant, rash men*. Some of the *wiser*



*ser Heads* indeed he saith *were absent*; by which he would have it believed, that those who were present were a Company of *illiterate and injudicious blockheads*. And so infallibly they must be, if in the affairs of religion, and the judgment and doctrines of the Ancient Church, they understand nothing but by *prophecy or inspiration*, as he saith, p. 31. that is, nothing at all. Neither can he relieve himself, by suggesting as if some *who were present dissented*. For his friends might have informed him, that after some previous discourse, as usually happens at such meetings; when the *Censure and Decree* was settled and agreed upon, there was not one person who opened his mouth, or said one word in opposition to it, either as to matter or form. So that all who were present are equally involved in those decent epithets before mentioned.

From the *Decreeing Heads* let us pass to the *Decree* it self; this is stiled *the rash and hasty judgment of some of the Heads of Colleges and Halls*; and immediately afterwards, he sets himself to shew the *rashness and injudiciousness* of this Decree, p. 11. Sure our Author when he made this reflexion had his own writings before him, in which there are so many marks of haste and precipitation. But let us consider these epithets apart. First he says it was a *hasty judgment*;  
but

but that is more than he knows; and if it were as hasty as he imagines, yet I must tell him, that is no disparagement to it in this case. For there are some things so grossly and palpably false and absurd, that their falshood and absurdity appear at first view, and therefore require no long time, or previous deliberation to detect them, and when they are so detected, I hope it is no Argument of rashness to condemn them. And such were the propositions censured in the Decree, which are directly repugnant to the common faith, and universally received doctrines of all sound Christians; tending plainly to overthrow the *Unity of the Godhead*, which is the first and Fundamental principle of all Religion, whether natural or revealed.

But if these propositions were not so grossly and palpably absurd, yet the condemnation of them could not be accounted *injudicious*; because the Heads, who were concerned in that Censure, herein followed and were governed by the *judgment* and determinations of Fathers and Councils. To make this more plain. Suppose any one now should assert, that there are *two persons*, or but *one nature* in Christ, and thereby revive the Heresy of *Nestorius*, or *Eutyches*; would it require any long time and previous consultations to Censure those positions? or could such a Censure so passed  
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be accused of rashness? I say no, because we have the example and Authority of two *General Councils*, to justify such a Condemnation, which cannot be impeached of imprudence, without reflecting upon the wisdom and integrity, not only of the Fathers who composed those august Assemblies, but likewise of the *Catholick Church*, which hath confirmed their sentence, by rejecting those errors which they Condemned. He on the other hand, is justly to be accounted rash and arrogant who presumes to oppose his own single opinion, to the judgment and determinations of Fathers and Councils; and upon that account endeavors *fixa refigere*, to shake and unsettle those Doctrines, and those words in which they have bin conveyed down to us, and which are now universally established in the Christian Church.

In short therefore, to censure any positions which have already bin condemned by any *General Councils*, doth not require any slow or tedious consultations; it is sufficient to declare them impious and scandalous, because they have bin so adjudged formerly, by assemblies composed of persons who have bin celebrated for their wisdom and learning, and renowned for their soundness in the faith and their zeal for it.

And so it was in the case before us. The propositions censured by the Decree, were such as

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had formerly bin condemned by the famous *Council of Nice*, whose *Determinations* have bin received with respect and reverence by all good Christians, and make up at this day part of the established Doctrine of all the Churches in the Christian World: who, amidst that variety of judgments and opinions in other matters, are at perfect agreement among themselves in this, that the Father and Son are *Consubstantial*, or of one and the same Substance, to which assertions the propositions condemned, are plainly and diametrically opposite; it being absolutely impossible that two or three individual Substances, should be one and the same Substance.

The second thing which ought not to be passed over without observation, is that undecent reflection, which in more places than one of this examination, he passes upon *zeal*. One would think, he accounteth it unlawful and unwarrantable in the affairs of Religion; or else sure he would never brand any man with the name of *Zealot*, as if it were a mark of infamy and reproach. He ought therefore to be told, that there never was a just sense, and a firm belief of Religion found in any person, where it was not likewise accompanied with a *zeal & concern* for it; which for that reason was never condemned by  
any

any wise or honest man. Neither indeed can it be censured, without a bold and dangerous reflection upon our blessed Savior himself; and together with him, upon those wise and good men who in all ages of the world, as occasion hath served, have shewen a *zeal* for the Glory of God, and a just concern for the preservation, and maintenance of the true Religion.

It is true indeed it may be, as oftentimes it hath bin, joined with ignorance, or excess; in which cases it hath bin found to be so far from being serviceable to the interest of truth, that it hath rather bin the occasion of a great deal of mischief in the world. But on the other hand, to disparage and expose it without any just restriction and limitation, is to introduce a *coldness and indifference* among men in the great affairs of Religion, which in time may end in the ruin and extinction of it.

Perhaps it will be said, that he doth not design to condemn *zeal* absolutely and for it self, but as it is to be found in conjunction with some other ill qualifications, which are apt to corrupt and spoil it: the best things being liable to abuse, and when they are so abused, they often prove very hurtful and mischievous. I find it therefore joined with two other qualities, for the sake of which possibly, he may speak disrespectfully of it. The first



whereof is *Warmth*, p. 2. where he represents a certain member of the University under the character of a *warm Zealot*; which to be sure he did not design to be a commendation, but rather a Title of contempt and disgrace. The other is *Orthodoxie* or soundness in the faith, p. 24. where in the same slight and contemptuous manner, he styles some persons, *our modern Orthodox Zealots*; to which he joyns an other ornamental Epithete of *Heresy makers*. It may not possibly then be *bare naked Zeal*, but zeal thus *qualified*, which he thinks fit to condemn.

As to the first Epithete of *Warm*; if zeal found in conjunction with *Warmth*, be blame-worthy, than I would fain know of him where he can direct us to find out any kind of zeal, which will not come under the same condemnation. In all his great reading did he ever meet with any Author who furnished him with the notion of a *cold zeal*; or in this case did he ever meet with any medium between hot and cold, i. e. a *luke-warm zeal*. Doth this great critick in languages know whence this word is derived?

Perhaps he will say, that it was not the bare *Warmth*, but the *Excess* of it, which he disliked in this *Zealot*. But I do not hear that he did promote any petition, or use any endeavors that the Sermon should be *burned*, but that the propositions



positions delivered in it which gave great occasion of offence, should be *condemned*. However let the warmth of this *zealot* be what it will, the reflexion made upon it by this examiner can never be excused in him, who in many of his writings discovers such an *intemperate heat*, as hath bin disapproved by his friends as well as enemies. Nay there is one peculiar circumstance of his *warmth*, for which I think no tolerable excuse can possibly be made by any person, tho never so much byassed in his favor; and that is, the *fervor* which he hath discovered on both sides of the question; having discoursed *pro* and *con*, and with *equal violence* appeared in defence of quite contrary opinions.

It is true indeed, it is no disparagement to any man to alter his opinion; provided that that change be attended with modesty, and supported by reason. But whoever shall maintain both parts of a contradiction, and then with equal fury shall think to bear down all opposition; it is plain such an one can have no sincere concern for truth, but only for his own opinion, and thereby gives too great occasion, to call in question either his *judgment*, or *sincerity*, which are hereby brought under a just suspicion.

But 2<sup>dly</sup>, Supposing that a *warm zeal* may be excused, yet I find a zeal for *the Faith* is not like

to meet with the same fair quarter ; for an *Orthodox Zealot*, is a pernicious creature, and never to be endured ; who will be sure either to find or make Heresies ; and thereby disturb the quiet and peace of the world. But where, I beseech you, can a man employ his zeal more commendably, than in the defence and maintenance of the truth ; especially when it is of great importance ? As it certainly must be, when the opposite error is such, as plainly overturns the foundations of our Religion ; and this is plainly the case before us. But it seems, a zeal for errors, for false and impious opinions may be warranted, tho attended with all the warmth, nay with all the rudeness and scurrility imaginable ; but we must not lift up a finger to support the faith, nor open our mouths in defence of it, but presently they must be stopped again, with such dirty & foul language as this examiner thinks fit to fling in our faces. This is not just and equal dealing.

3dly, The next thing that calls for our observation is, that strange vein of pride and haughtiness which runs through this paper. To give an account of all particulars of this nature, would be in a manner to transcribe his book, which ought not to be honoured with too many Editions. I shall therefore confine my self to two particulars, in which a vanity and arrogance which

which are insupportable are too plainly discovered.

The first is, the charge of *Heresy*, which almost in every page, he lays at the doors of all them who differ from him in his notion of three *distinct minds and substances* in the blessed Trinity; the denial of which he over and over calls *Sabellianism*, and in the conclusion of these papers, he dubb's with the honourable titles of *Heresy and nonsense*. But I would fain know how this Dean comes to be thus invested with this large Authority and prerogative of *adjudging and declaring Heresy*, which he saith, and saith rightly, *ought not to be entrusted with any single person, nor any body of men less than a National Synod*. I do not know that he is his Majesty's High Commissioner for Ecclesiastical affairs.

Perhaps it will be said, that he did this by way of retaliation: the *Heads of Houses* declared his notion of *three minds and substances* to be Heretical; and he adjudges their opinion of *three persons and one substance* to be so too. Here he doth but recriminate, and therefore is on the same level with these *Decreeing Heresy-making Heads*. If this be a fault, it is a fault on both sides, and they are alike equally criminal.

To which I answer, 1<sup>st</sup>, That the *Heads of Houses* by the judgment and declaration which they

they made, were very far from designing to assume to themselves an illegal and extravagant power of adjudging or declaring any matter or cause to be Heresy, which was not, as they thought, adjudged and declared to be so before by a competent Authority, and allowed for such by the Laws of this Land. The Doctrine of *one substance* was Decreed in the *Council of Nice*, confirmed afterwards by all the other *General Councils*; to which the contrary opinion of *three substances*, as was said before, is diametrically opposite; and therefore by the whole Church hath bin in former ages accounted and adjudged *Hetical*.

On the other hand, the examiner declares the belief of *one substance* in the Trinity to be Heresy, not only which had never bin declared so before by any *Council* either *general* or *particular*: but quite contrary to the plain meaning of the *Canonical Scriptures*, to the express determinations of *General Councils*, to the established Faith and Doctrine of the *Catholick Church*; to all which, he hath with unparallel'd pride and presumption bid defiance, and thereby brings himself within the compass and condemnation of the Law.

But 2<sup>dly</sup>, The judgment and declaration of the *Heads of Houses*, was made with a particular regard

regard to the Members of their own Body, over whom they are entrusted with a just and legal Authority. They have reason to look upon themselves to be under a strict and sacred obligation, to prevent as far as in them lies, the growth of any pernicious Doctrines in Religion. Some such had bin preached among them, which they had reason to fear, might in time gain ground, if not timely obviated. To prevent therefore the infection and growth of such *false and impious opinions*, they thought fit to publish their Decree, which, as I said before, had a particular regard to those persons who were committed to their care, *eorum fidei & curæ commissis*.

But this Dean like an *Universal Pastor and Bishop*, sets himself as it were in *Cathedra*, and from thence he dictates to the *whole Church*. He lifts up his voice, as if he would say, *audiat orbis Christianus*; I do declare, and let all persons take notice of it at their peril, that the Doctrine of three Persons, and one God, or *one Substance* in the God-head (which is all one, as shall be shewn by and by) is *Sabellianism*, is *Heresy and nonsense*. Would not this Dean, think you, have done well to have advised with some men of skill and learning, how far the reputation of his *wisdom and modesty*, (not now to mention the *Integrity of his Faith*, which thereby may



be justly called in question,) might be affected by such a bold and presumptuous declaration?

The next instance of his great modesty may be found in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> pages of this examination, where he makes an Apology for the use of *new forms of words, unusual, unscriptural forms of speech, in order to explain and declare, as he calls it the Catholick Faith*: several of which, as it is very well known, this examiner had invented and made use of to this purpose, in his vindication of the blessed Trinity, and for which he was justly called to an account by the learned *Animadverter*. Now among other things, which he offers in vindication of this bold and dangerous practice, p. 12. he tells us, *That the Church tho it never had authority to make a new Faith, yet it always had, and always will have authority to declare and explain the true Catholick Faith, in such words as are most aptly expressive of it, and necessary to countermine the Arts and Evasions of Hereticks.* And this he saith *will justify the use of such expressions as these, Three distinct infinite Minds, and Spirits, or three substances, how novel soever they may be thought.* To this suggestion of his I have several things to Answer. First he saith the Church hath Authority to use new, and unusual forms of words in Articles of Faith. But I am apt to think



think she would be very unwilling to exercise her power, and would never do it, except when pressed with a great and an unavoidable necessity. We have reason to think it would be one of her last remedies, when all other methods of preserving the faith had proved ineffectual.

It is true indeed, in the Ancient Church, the meaning of certain words which sometime were of doubtful and ambiguous signification, were afterwards settled and determined, such as was *substantia*, *persona*, *voia*, *καρσας*. And some new unscriptural words, such as the *ομολογιον*, were made choice of by the Fathers, and put into their Creeds, in order to detect the hypocrisy and Heresy of the *Arians*. But this was not done till after many disputations, and great deliberation: and afterwards they thought themselves obliged to declare the necessity they were under, of settling the sense of one word upon this important subject, which was not a new word neither, but such as had bin formerly used, before they would impose it on the Church. So weighty a thing was the faith and peace of the Church, in the opinion of those great men in those days.

But tho they introduced some new words, and settled the signification of others, they never did attempt to alter, and lay aside the use of any which had formerly bin of general usage, and

uniyerſally received among Chriſtians, in order to introduce new ones in the room of them. On the other hand the Church hath condemned all *xyroſolia*, all new invented terms; and hath forbid the introducing any ſuch, under the pain of *deprivation* or *Anathematization*. And for this Decree of the 6th General Council, the third of *Conſtantinople*, the Church in ſucceeding ages hath preſerved ſo great a veneration, that none, either *Greek* or *Latin*, *Roman* or *Reformed*, have ever ſince complained of the hardſhip of that Synodical ſentence, or have endeavored to reverſe it. But on the other hand, they have declared a high diſpleaſure againſt all ſuch who have at any time attempted any ſuch innovations. As is evident from the fate that attended *Abbot Joachim*, and *Valentinus Gentilis*; the one in his book, the other in his perſon.

All this the *Dean* had formerly bin put in mind of by the learned *Animadverter*; and yet notwithstanding this monition, he ſtill perſiſts in that preſumptuous humor, of uſing and defending theſe *new, unuſual, inconvenient* forms of ſpeech; and which he himſelf allows may be liable to an *Heretical meaning*.

But 2dly, Let it be granted, that the *Church* may alter old phraſes; but hath ſhe actually made uſe of that her Authority in the caſe before us?

us? Hath she published any declaration, whereby she hath discovered her pleasure in this affair, viz. that the old words, such as those of *persons*, *Hypostasis*, *subsistence*, should be laid aside to make room for *self-consciousness*, and *mutual consciousness*? Or that *one nature*, *one essence*, *one substance*, must be discarded, and in their place, the phrases of *three distinct minds*, *spirits*, and *substances* should be introduced. That maxime in Law, is true here in Divinity; *eo-dem modo res solvitur quo ligatur*. The Church hath tyed us to the use of these words, I pray who hath set us at liberty? why he saith, or at least intimates, that the Church hath. But what Church I beseech you? why none that I know of, except it be that which is included, and which he carries about with him in his own person. How comes he to be styled the Church? That you must know is by a Synecdoche, whereby the *Dean of a Church* may be called the Church it self. Tho others may account it rather a *Catachresis*, or *vocis abusus*; when a word is abused, being transferred from a proper to a very improper and absurd signification.

But sure the *Dean* cannot so far forget himself, as to arrogate to himself the name of the Church. He doth not that I know of indeed assume the *name*, but he plainly doth the *Authority*

city of the Church. And under her name and power he shelters himself. For as was said before, p. 16. he justifies his own innovations, by saying *that the Church always had, and always will have Authority to use such words as she thinks most expressive of the faith.* How can this Apology vindicate him, except either he be the Church, or at least be commissioned by her, and invested with her Authority?

I presume he will not pretend to be *formally* the Church either *Oecumenical* or *National*. He must therefore only be so, either *virtually*, or by way of *representation*. And sure some such thing he fancies of himself, viz. that the *Christian Faith*, or at least the *words* wherein it is to be expressed, are committed to his care, or rather are to be disposed of at his pleasure. Otherwise sure he would never talk as he doth in this book. For instance, p. 16. He hath these remarkable words. *Now since Person is the Catholick word, which long Ecclesiastical use hath rendered familiar, I should by no means allow of any other word in this mystery, could we retain the Catholick Faith, together with the word.*

What must words be used, or laid aside at his discretion? He acknowledges the word to be Ecclesiastical: the Church hath made it her own; she hath adopted it into her Creeds, and confessions

fions of her Faith: by long use it is now rendered familiar, and is become the common Language of all Christians. What Authority I pray hath he to order the laying of it aside? *I should by no means allow, &c.*

It is fit he should be told upon this occasion, that this word was anciently used without his leave, and will still continue to be so without his allowance. For neither the faith nor language of the Church have any such dependance upon him, as that they must stand or fall at his pleasure.

But lastly, whatever Authority the Church may have to alter the *usual and received forms of speech*, yet to be sure she would never exercise it, except forced, as was intimated before, by some very great, and some very apparent reason. To this he answers *that there is as great reason and necessity for such an alteration of words now, as ever there was in any age of the Church*, p. 12. And the reason that he assigns is this, *viz.* That we are *in great danger of losing the Catholick Faith, by the revival of the Heresy of Sabellius*, p. 16. which walks publickly abroad, tho under the disguise of a new name. And if we believe him it is *one of those doctrines too publickly received in the Church of England, which are not the true doctrines of our Church*, p. 44.  
Now



Now this, I cannot but say, is not only extremely false, but likewise a very scandalous suggestion. Because it must not only affect our own times and Nation; but likewise bring all other Churches *Ancient and Modern, Eastern and Western, Roman and Reformed* under the same suspicion. For all these are at perfect agreement both in the belief of the Doctrine of the Trinity, and in the manner of expressing their Faith; which is by the profession of *three persons*, and *one nature or substance*. So that if by retaining the old words there is danger of losing the *Catholick Faith*, it must be lost out of the *Catholick Church*: and this revolt to *Sabellianism*, must be both the most lasting, and the most general *Apostasy*, that ever was foretold, or feared should happen to the Christian Church.

But as to what may concern this Church, I believe, if all wise and good men in it, have reason to fear any danger, 'tis from another quarter; I mean from the revival of the *Heresies* of *Arius*, *Pelagius*, and *Socinus*, which some evil men with great industry, and with no small art, endeavor to propagate among us.

But *2dly*, Tho the charge of *Sabellianism* be a very great and heavy one, yet we ought not to look upon it to be such a bug-bear, as thereby to be affrighted out of our Religion. We may  
comfort



comfort our selves with this, that this imputation is no other, nor better, than what hath formerly bin made by *Hereticks* against the *Orthodox*. For the *Arian* ' against whom *Zanchy* wrote, in his *Antithesis doctrinae Christianae & Antichristi de uno vero Deo*; and ' *Valentinus Gentilis* in order to establish his Doctrine of *three distinct infinite Spirits*, made the very same objection against the *Catholick Faith*, with relation to the error of *Sabellius*. *Cantilenam Sabellii nobis obgannit*, saith *Aretius* of *Gentilis*; & *eandem nobis cantilenam occinit Decanus*, may we say.

But as they who believe three persons and but one nature or substance, are as far from being *Sabellians*, as any the greatest *Tritheist*; so they no doubt will be as ready to oppose the attempts of such, who at any time hereafter may endeavor to revive the Heresy of *Sabellius*. But in order to combate that Heresy, they will not think themselves obliged to use any other wea-

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<sup>1</sup> *Orthodoxi universo orbi Christiano testatum faciunt, se Patrem, Filium, & Spiritum Sanctum in unum individuum constare, ita ut pater non sit alius: revera quam filius; nec filius alius quam pater: sed ejusdem substantiae uterque, idque hoc ipsum est quod Heresis Sabelliana. Arian. apud Zanch.*

<sup>2</sup> *Quam ad supplicium educeretur (scil. Val. Gentilis) non desit homo pertinacissimus, & ex sola indomita pervicacia gloriam querens, (sicut Satanae Martyres solent) ingeminare, se pro gloria altissimi Dei pati. Nos omnes esse Sabellianos, & Deum habere trinum, Benedicti Aretii. Hist. Valent. Gent.*

pons, than those with which in former times it hath bin so succesfully vanquished. The faith hath bin transmitted down to us for these thirteen centuries, in that *form of sound words*, viz. *Three Persons and one nature*, and hath conquered all opposition made against it; and in all times since, they who have refused the *Language* of the Church, have bin justly suspected to be no true friends to the *faith of it*; which now by long use, and the prescription of so many ages, have contracted such a friendship, that they are like to live or die together.

And therefore we find none, as I now intimated, who in any times heretofore, either quarrelled with, or rejected the words established in the Church, but either open *Hereticks*, or such who were justly suspected to favor their errors. Thus of old, the *Arians* and *Semi-Arians* were displeased with the words, ἑστία, ὁμοούσιον, ὑπόστασις, because these ' words troubled and gave offence to many forsooth; and were such as rather perplexed than explained this Doctrine, being above the reach of mens understanding and conceptions. So the *Polish* and *Transylvanian U-*

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Ἰ Οὐ γὰρ τίνα τῶν πατέρων μνησθὲν γενέσθαι, ἡδὲ μετὰ τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ὅτι ἐν ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς, ἡ γένεσις μετὰ τῶν, καὶ ὅτι ταῦτα ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γινώσκον καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπων ὡς ἔστι. *Vid. Athan. de Synod. Arim. & Seleu. Epist. p. 903. Edit. Colon. & alibi passim. p. 906. 908.*

*nitarians* in their times made the same complaints. That the Church by using those words, *homoousion, Person, Essence, Unity, Trinity*, had perfectly confounded all right notions of God, and in a manner overturned the Christian Religion. *Valentinus Gentilis* echoed back the same calumnies, from *Bern* and *Geneva*, and called the former words *monstruosæ & profanæ voces, quibus omnia divina mysteria pervertuntur.*

And to bring up the rear, we find the Dean in his vindication, declaring his displeasure against them in the like expressions, p. 138. where he tells us, that that which hath confounded this mystery, hath bin the vain endeavor of reducing it to terms of art, such as *Nature, Essence, Substance, Existence, Hypostasis, Person* and the like. I am sorry to find him in such ill company. Tho I charitably hope he is not engaged in the same evil designs with them. However it will become all men of wisdom and integrity, to avoid giving any the least countenance to such tho but suspicious practices, which we have reason to think, were first set on foot on purpose to undermine our holy Faith and Religion.

There is one thing more to be observed, before I come to consider the propositions, which I had almost forgotten; but it must not by any means

be omitted, and that is, his very curious and critical remark upon the Latin Decree, p. 5. where he tells us that *he who drew it up need not brag much of his skill in Latin, having transgressed the plain rules of Grammar, in using EORUM FIDEI ET CURÆ for SUÆ FIDEI ET CURÆ.* And for this, that you may not rely only on his word and single judgment, he vouches the Authority of some Criticks, *some Criticks say, &c.* Who those Criticks are we are not able to divine: perhaps they may be found in the number of those *wise and Learned men whom he mentions in the 6th page, and of whom he undertakes to procure a meeting any day in the year, to censure the Oxford Decree.*

But whosoever those Criticks were, I am sure neither He nor They have any great reason to boast of their skill in *Criticism.* For I would fain know what those Rules of Grammar are which he saith are transgressed, by using *eorum* for *suæ fidei.* Some wags sure pretending to be Criticks imposed on him. I will endeavor to set him right. And therefore for his better information, I would direct him to the Oxford Grammar, and to the observations which are there made, p. 232. upon the pronouns *sui* and *suus*, which are called *Reciproca, quia reflectuntur ad id quod præcessit in eadem oratione.*

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But perhaps he may think that book beneath his perusal; he may therefore, if he pleases, consult *Gerhard Vossius*, in his book *de Sermonis constructione*, where in the 56th chap. he will find three Canons or Rules laid down *de Reciprocis*; the last of which, being to our present purpose, is this: *Si ob neglectum reciproci nulla oriatur ambiguitas, potest aliquando reciproci loco aliud relativum poni.* This is the Rule, and there he may likewise find several examples among the most approved Authors. Cic. Philipp. 2. *Omnes boni quantum in ipsis fuit, Cæsarem occiderunt.* Idem 3. de Off. *per fuga Fabritio pollicitus est, si præmium ei proposuisset, &c.* Id 1. de Off. *Si non poterit causas defendere, illa præstare debet, quæ erunt in ipsius potestate.* Quintil. Declam. 3. *neque ignoravit, quæ eum manerent pericula.* More instances he may there find to this purpose, out of *Curtius*, *Pliny*, &c. Now the Dean I hope will not be so hardy, as to say, that *Tully*, and *Pliny*, and *Quintilian* were ignorant of the rules, nay the plain rules of Grammar. The Dean I verily believe, knew nothing of this matter. He hath no better way then that I can think of to come off, but to tell the world that some persons under the disguise of Criticks imposed upon him; the confession of



his ignorance being in this case his best excuse, tho at best it is but a very sorry one.

Having thus finished these previous remarks, I come now to consider more particularly the *Propositions* which occasioned the *Oxford Decree*, and which were condemned by it. The *Propositions* are these: *There are three infinite distinct minds and substances in the Trinity.* Item, *that the three persons in the Trinity, are three infinite distinct minds or spirits, and three individual Substances.* These are adjudged and declared to be *False, Impious, &c.* He desires to know the reasons upon which this *Decree* was grounded, which he saith, in the conclusion of his Examination, p. 46. *had much better have bin thought on at first, and then we should have escaped this Decree:* Intimating thereby, what he had in broad words expressed before, that it was *a rash injudicious Censure*, neither managed with consideration, nor supported by any good reason.

I must confess for my own part, I do not see any just ground why we should comply with this Examiner's expectation. For reasons have already bin offered by the Learned *Animadverter*, and those penned with such a strength and clearness, as are peculiar to his writings. But he saith, he cannot persuade himself to read what the *Animadverter* hath written on this occasion. To  
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what purpose therefore is it to offer any new Arguments, which must all be lost, upon one, who superciliously disdains to peruse and consider, what either hath, or what may hereafter be charitably proposed for his conviction? But because he, who resolved never to read whatever should be written by the *Animadverter*, may perhaps cast a scornful glance on these papers, I shall therefore so far gratify him in his demand, as to offer him one Reason against his *three Substances* in the blessed Trinity, but it shall be a *substantial one*, and such as most men I am sure, will look upon to be as considerable, and as effectual to shew the falshood and impiety of his opinion, as if twenty were proposed. And that is this, *viz.* That if there be *three distinct substances*, (and the same is to be said of *three distinct minds and Spirits*) in the Trinity, then there must unavoidably be three Gods.

This hath bin so plainly and irrefragably already made out by the Learned *Animadverter*, that if the *Dean* would have vouchsafed to have spent that time in reading and examining the *Animadversions*, which he hath mispent in examining the *Oxford Decree*, it would have spared any farther trouble or pains in this affair.

Now for a farther proof and confirmation of this reason, I shall lay down some observations,

tions, which carry such a plainness and evidence along with them, as cannot I think be gainsaid or resisted, but by such who are before-hand resolved to persist in their errors, and are hardened against all conviction. Such as 1<sup>st</sup>. That the *Existence and Unity of the Godhead*, is the first and Fundamental principle of all Religion, both revealed and natural. And consequently that there cannot be more Gods than one, in any sense whatsoever; if the word God be taken in its proper, and not in a *Metaphorical and Figurative* signification. That therefore which I affirm is, that there are not more Gods than one, either Superior or Inferior; Coordinate or Subordinate; Numerical or Specific; Ancient or Modern. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord*, Deut. 6. 4. *The Lord he is God, and there is none else besides him*, Deut. 4. 35. But this is the dictate of nature as well as the language of the Scripture; *Reason* (I mean where it is not corrupted and depraved) and *Revelation* both conspiring to teach us this Lesson.

2<sup>dly</sup>, That, there being but one God, from thence it must follow, that in God there must be but one *nature*, one *essence*. Because *essence* is that by which every thing is constituted that which it is: it is the *ratio formalis* of that thing be it what it will, & *primo de re concipitur*,  
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being the first thing that offers it self to our thoughts, when we form an Idea of it. One essence, one nature, constitutes one thing; Two natures, two or more essences, constitute two or more things. Where there is one human or Angelical nature, there is but one man, one Angel. Where there are two or more, there are two or more men or Angels: *Peter, and John, Michael, and Gabriel.* And so for the same reason, there being but one God, there can be but one divine essence; and if more essences, more Gods.

3dly, That when we speak of God, the words *Essence, Nature, Substance, Divinity,* are *Synonymous* terms, and signify one and the same thing. Thus in the Fathers, *ὑπόστασις, φύσις, ἰερότης,* are promiscuously used to denote the divine nature, or Godhead. The Divine *Nature, Essence, Substance,* being nothing else but the *Deity or Divinity*: and the *Divinity*, vice versa, is nothing, but the Divine *Nature, Substance, Essence.*

4thly, Therefore, if in the Trinity there are *three distinct Substances,* there must be three distinct *Essences,* and *Divinities,* and consequently, there must be three Gods. For that there is *one God,* or *more Gods* than one, must depend upon the *Unity* or *Multiplication* of the divine nature and essence. If there be but one divine

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*Nature, Substance, Divinity*, there is, and for that reason it is impossible there should be any more than *one God*; and if more *distinct Substances and Divinities*, there must be *more Gods*. As the former are numbred and multiplied, so are the latter; in the same proportion, both as to *number and kind*. If there be but *three distinct Substances and Divinities*, there are but three Gods; and if those Substances be only numerically distinguished, then they constitute only three numerical Gods; but if specifically distinguished, then there must be three Gods of a different kind, that is specifically distinguished from each other.

5<sup>thly</sup>, That the *Unity* of the Godhead is the most *perfect and complete* sort of Unity that can be imagined. No Nature, Essence, Substance, can in any sense be more *one*, than the Divine Nature or Essence is; which hath such so perfect, and so peculiar a *Simplicity and Identity*, as to exclude all manner of *division*, and all sorts of *Multiplication*.

It is true indeed, there is one peculiar prerogative of the Divine Nature and Substance, founded in its infinite, and therefore transcendent perfection, whereby it is capable of residing in more persons than one; and is accordingly communicated from the Father, to the Son, and holy Ghost:



Ghost. But this is done without any division, or multiplication; so that the *same* divine nature is a *singular*, but not a *solitary* nature, being whole and entire in the three blessed persons; in each of which it doth completely subsist, tho with a different manner of subsistence; yet so, as to retain its most *complete Identity*, excluding all plurality of essences, whether *equal or unequal, like or unlike*; the Divine nature being but one and the same, as was said before, in the three divine persons, without *diversity* and without *distinction*. The Persons indeed are distinguished from each other by a *true, real, proper distinction*. But this is not founded in the diversity or distinction of their *natures*, but is taken from the different ways of *subsistence*, which one and the same nature hath in the three persons; whereby they have different *properties, characters, and relations*, which are absolutely incommunicable to each other, and whereby some things may be affirmed of one, which cannot possibly be affirmed of either of the others. Such as are the *generation* of the Son; the *procession and mission* of the holy Ghost.

And in this different manner of subsistence is founded, as the *distinction*, so likewise the *subordination* between the divine Persons: the *Father* being the first, and therefore styled by the

Fathers, the *Origine and Fountain of the Divinity* with respect to the Son and holy Ghost. Not by the production of a new divine nature, but by a communication of his own, which, as the Fathers always speak, is *μία ἡ Τριτη*, one and the very same, in all three, without *separation, difference, or distinction*. This is indeed a great mystery, but we speak of the blessed Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, which hath bin always looked upon by the greatest and wisest men in the Church, to be above all expressions and description. If any man therefore will not be satisfied with this general account, but will be putting new and nice questions, and desire to be informed with *Nicodemus*, *πῶς ταῦτα γινώσκαι δύναται*; how can these things be? Then I must acquaint him once for all, that neither man, nor Angel can give a satisfactory answer to such enquiries, which are not only impertinent but dangerous; proceeding from a wanton, and impious curiosity, which ought severely to be condemned. As for us of this place, I hope we shall always endeavor to regulate our apprehensions in the affairs of Religion, by the discoveries which God hath made in the holy writings; accounting that the truest wisdom, when men are *wise according to what is written*. And therefore in spight of all the objections and flouts of *Arians*,  
*Soci-*

*Socinians, Tritheists, Atheists*, we will resolve to believe what is revealed, and to adore what we cannot comprehend.

Lastly, Since the *Unity* of the divine nature is such, and so perfect as is before described, therefore we may conclude, that all those, who attempt to explain it by a *specifical sameness and identity*, are so far from confirming that they plainly undermine this great and fundamental truth.

For *ist*, hereby they destroy a true *real Unity*, and in the room of it, introduce only a *notional Unity*, which may be consistent with, nay indeed, as the Dean hath bin told, implies a multiplication of the divine nature. So that when we say the *three persons* are *one God*, they are no otherwise *one* according to this explication, than as ten thousand individual men, are one man, or a myriad of Angels, are one Angel.

Neither is it enough to say, that the three divine natures and substances are *United in the Trinity*; but are *separated or divided* in the persons of Angels and men. For this will not alter the case; for the *three substances* so united, retain their true and real distinction from each other, notwithstanding that Union, and are still as much three as if they were not united. And therefore this *Union* of natures will no more

constitute *one nature*, than the *Union* of the *three persons* in the *Trinity*, who are most intimately, and inseparably united to each other, will make *one person*; or than the *Union* of both natures *Divine and Humane*, in our blessed Savior, will constitute and make one nature. *Eutyches* of old maintained such a senseless opinion; but the Fathers told him, that those natures were united, it is true, but yet, *ἀσυγχύτως* and *ἀτρέτως*, without confusion, alteration, or conversion of either into the other. So that each nature retained its own powers, faculties and properties, entire and distinct from those of the other, without any mixture or change.

The like is to be said, of the union of several essences and natures in the *Trinity*. For should such an union be allowed, yet still the natures must remain entire and distinct; and so must their attributes likewise. They must have distinct understandings, and wills, and distinct operations, as flowing from powers and faculties, essentially distinguished; and consequently they must be *three Gods* to all intents and purposes, when *united*, as much as if they were *separated*.

But 2<sup>dly</sup>, A *specifical sameness* of the Godhead, is by no means to be allowed, because it destroys the true and fundamental reason of that unity,

unity, *viz.* the *infinite perfection* of the divine nature, which renders it absolutely incapable of any *multiplication*; and places it upon another weak and unstable foundation; *viz.* the operation of the mind and understanding. So that the unity of the Godhead according to this hypothesis, doth not result from the nature of God, but is owing to, and dependent upon the operation of some intellect, drawing one common notion from the agreement which it observes in several individuals. Which to affirm would certainly be both a monstrous and a Blasphemous assertion; ss the *Animadverter bath very judiciously observed*, p. 183.

From all these observations, I think it is as evident as any truth in nature, that to assert *three substances* in the blessed Trinity, is plainly to imply, and in other words to affirm, that there are *three Gods*; which assertion therefore in the judgment not only of all *true Christians*, but even of *Jews and Mahometans*, and some *sober Pagans*, would be accounted and adjudged *false and impious*, as it is declared to be by the *Oxford Censure*.

But against this the Dean will urge in behalf of his *three distinct substances*; the plurality and distinction of persons in the Trinity. Are there not three Persons in the Godhead? Yes. Are not



not these three Persons three *substantial Persons*? Yes, we acknowledge they are. Tho by the by, this epithet of *substantial* when added to Person, is superfluous, and is no better than a plain tautology; because the very notion of Person imports the perfection and complement of substance, so that it receives no addition to its signification by the word substantial.

But to pass this by, and proceed to his questions: Are not three substantial persons, *three distinct substances*? I answer, no. For these three persons have but *one and the same substance*, or nature that is common to them all; which nature hath *three different ways of subsisting* in the three persons. From which different ways of subsisting, as I said before, do result *distinct properties, and relations*, belonging to each of those divine persons, and which are incommunicable to the others. All these questions so often and so impertinently proposed by the Dean, are easily resolved by proposing the like questions, in other words, but such as are, perfectly equipollent.

Are not the Persons in the Trinity three distinct *Divine Persons*? Yes. Is not every divine Person, truly and properly God? Yes. Is it not then as plain, that if there be three distinct divine Persons, there must consequently be three Gods? I answer, no. Because, tho each of them distinctly  
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is a divine Person, and therefore God ; yet they have but *one and the same Divinity or Godhead* in common to them all : so that they are distinguished only by their personalities, but are united in one divine nature or Godhead. And therefore, as the *Athanasian Creed* tells us, *tho we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord ; yet we are forbidden by the Catholick Religion, to say there are three Gods, or three Lords.*

Now of all this I would desire no greater or plainer acknowledgment, than what I find in the writings of this examiner, and particularly in the papers before us. p. 18. he hath these words : *That there are three Persons and one God, is the Catholick Language, and therefore three belongs to the Persons, and one to the Godhead.* This is right : but in the words immediately succeeding, he quite overturns the Catholick Faith and Language, by saying : *That therefore whatever is essential to the notion of each Person, may be numbred and distinguished with the Persons.* From hence he would have it follow, as indeed it will, if this be allowed, that *spirit and substance* being included in the notion of a Person, it must be *multiplied* with it, so that as there are *three Persons*, so there must be *three spirits, three substances*, in the Trinity.

Now this is extremely false; for by the same way, and for the same reason that there are three substances or three spirits, there must be three Godheads. He saith no: adding that this will not affect the *unity of the Godhead*; for *three*, he saith, *belongs to the persons, which are three, not to the Godhead, which is but one*: very right. And must it not be said for the same reason, that when we affirm that there are *three substantial Persons*, *three* is to be applied to *Persons*, and not to *substance*; because *substance* when we speak of God, being equipollent to *Godhead*, as was said before, is but *one*, and therefore cannot be *multiplied*? But cannot what is essential to the notion of a person, be numbred and distinguished with the person? No, by no means; for tho it may and must be so in *finite persons*, it is not so when we speak of the divine *infinite persons* in the Trinity. Because there is something in each of those persons, which in common belongs to them all; such is the divine *nature, substance, Godhead*, which is so in each as to be *whole and entire* in all three; and therefore tho residing in, and applied to each person, yet it may not, it cannot be numbred or distinguished with the persons; who are distinguished by their properties and relations, which arise from three different ways & manners of their subsistence,

fistence, but not by their *substance* and Godhead, which is but one and the same in all three, without *division, distinction, or multiplication*. The same orthodox acknowledgment we have, p. 21. tho tacked by him, according to his usual method, to an egregious contradiction. There he saith: *that the divine nature is whole and entire in each divine Person; and that infinite, and infinite, and infinite, when applied to the Persons, are but one and the same infinite nature*. Very right: but then with the same breath in a manner he puffs all this away; by telling us, *that each of the divine Persons is a distinct infinite mind; and yet that these three infinite distinct minds can have but one and the same divine nature*. Which is a plain contradiction, making one to be three, and three one, in one and the same respect. And is no better than if he should say, in three Gods, there is but one and the same Godhead; for infinite mind and spirit is but the same thing in other words with God, as he himself elsewhere acknowledges.

Lastly to mention no more, p. 29, 30. He repeats the same orthodox expressions: *The Scripture-notion of the Unity of God is not such an Unity as is only in one Person, for then it could not enjoin the Faith and worship of Father, Son, and holy Ghost. But such an Unity as can be between*

*three: when the one same divine nature, is wholly and entirely communicated by the eternal Father, to the eternal Son, and by the Father and the Son, to the eternal Spirit, without any division or separation. And that which is communicated whole and entire, without division or separation, makes no number, for it is but one still.* Here he is as sound and orthodox as *Athanasius*; but when he comes to explain himself, and therein to give us his true sentiments, ( for all the former expressions, are but an artificial disguise of his errors ) then he uses such a *shuffling, ambiguous, deceitful* way of speaking, that you would think, that *Ursacius*, or *Valens*, or *Eusebius* of *Nicomedia*, were risen from the dead.

I confess I have bin beyond measure astonished, when I have perused his writings on this subject, to find such plain and gross contradictions, so often and so boldly uttered by him. Sometimes he will make a good and laudable confession of the Faith; and by and by he spoils all, by a very *fraudulent and treacherous explication*. And indeed hereby he hath laid the foundations of such a sophistical and deceitful way of writing; that if it should be countenanced in him, and thereupon imitated by others, it would render it almost impossible, either to *vindicate the truth*, or to *confute any Heresy*.

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This charge will be made good by considering these following particulars. Such as are 1<sup>st</sup>, his manifest, and manifold contradictions, with which his books written upon the subject, which is now before us, do every where abound. Whereby he affirms and denys the same thing, almost in a breath; and what he erects in one place, he presently kicks down in another. To make out this, I shall confine my self to one instance of it, relating to the Unity of the divine nature, p. 21. He saith the *Divine nature is whole and entire in each divine person, and the three divine persons*, whom he very falsely and very dangerously there calls three divine minds, *have the same one divine nature, and are but one and the same infinite nature.* p. 29. *There is but one and the same divinity or Godhead in them all*, speaking of the three persons. *The same one divinity or Godhead is entirely and indivisibly in three distinct persons.* p. 30. *The same one divine nature is wholly and entirely communicated from the Father to the Son, &c.* See p. 45. where you have the like expressions, by which he affirms that there is but one and the same nature, one Divinity, one Godhead in the three Persons. And yet in other places, he is as confident, that there is not *only one singular nature, and substance in God*; p. 16. *To say that there is one singular*

*substance in the Deity is the fundamental Article of the Sabellian Creed. p. 17. If there be but one singular divine nature and substance in the Deity, tho men could find a Trinity of Persons in this one divine nature (which yet p. 16. he represents as a ridiculous imagination) yet from thence he saith it must follow, that the whole Trinity must be incarnate. p. 23. Now to affirm that there is but one Godhead, one and the same divine nature in the three Persons; and yet to deny, that there is one singular divine nature and substance in those persons, I think, amounts to a very plain contradiction.*

I know it will be said, that he affirms and denies the Unity of the divine nature, but it is not in *the same respect*: when he saith it is *one*, he means that the same *specific* nature is whole and entire in the three Persons; but when he denies it to be *one*, he means, that there is not *one only singular, or numerical divine nature*, for this were, by so saying, to revive the Heresy of *Sabellius*.

I Answer, this will not save him from a contradiction. For let him make choice of which of these terms he pleases to express the Unity and sameness of the divine nature by, it is certain, that what he affirms in one place he denies in another. When he saith it is *one, one and the same,*

*same*, doth he mean *one singular, numerical nature*? if he means so, then this he doth at other times in plain downright terms deny, not only as a thing that is false, but as *Heretical, impossible, contradictory*, as was seen before. Well? when he asserts the Unity of the Godhead, and faith, *that one and the same divine nature is in the three Persons, wholly and entirely communicated from the Father to the Son*, as he expressed himself, p. 30. doth he mean a *specific Identity*? I suppose he doth, for p. 10. he tells us that *to assert three substances in the Arian notion, that is three distinct minds and species of substance, or three natures and essences specifically different, this is false, impious, and Heretical*. Therefore to affirm three natures of the same kind, must be a true, religious, orthodox acknowledgment.

This he must mean if he means any thing. Otherwise if he shall say, that when he affirms there are three natures, or substances, he means, that there are three, but yet which are neither of the same kind nor of a different kind; that is, neither numerically, nor specifically different: Then I say that he advances an absurd and an inexplicable position, which neither he nor any man else can possibly understand. But on the other hand, if he affirms or means a *specific Unity*

*Unity* in the Godhead, then I am sure he doth as plainly as words can make it, in other places contradict his meaning. For p. 19. He hath these words, *Tho the Ancient Fathers frequently make mention of a specifick Unity of nature in the Godhead, yet they did not confine the Unity of the divine nature to this.* And p. 33. *This specifick sameness doth not answer the complete notion of the divine Unity.* Nay, he doth not only say this, but gives a very good reason for it. p. 19. *The divine nature is no species, for it is but one.*

If there be any force in this consequence, it must be this *viz.* That the divine nature is but one *singular individual nature*, which is incapable of plurality or multiplication, and therefore it cannot be a *species*, because a *species*, can be multiplied, and therefore is capable of being affirmed and predicated *de pluribus*, of more things of the same kind. He proceeds: *The Unity of the Godhead is the most real, essential, indivisible unity.* Very right. Therefore say I, it is not a specifical Unity, the former assertion being a clear & an unanswerable proof that it is not so: For 1<sup>st</sup>, The Unity of the Godhead is *a real Unity*; but a specifick Unity, is only a *Logical and Notional one.* 2<sup>dly</sup>, The unity of the Godhead, is an *essential unity*, the unity of one *nature and essence*; the  
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specifick is only an *unity of several natures*, which are really and essentially, *à parte rei*, distinct from each other, and are only united in the understanding. *Lastly*, The unity of the Godhead is the *most real*, and therefore the most perfect unity; but a specifick unity is not the *most real*, but of a lesser sort, and much inferior to a singular and numerical Identity. It is this latter then that is to be found in the Godhead, which being uncapable of *division, or multiplication*, is for the same reason, as he himself acknowledges, uncapable of *numeration*. For *when we say three persons, Three belongs to the persons who are three, but not to the Godhead, which is but one*, p. 18.

And now is it not plain to any man, that the *Dean*, by thus going forward and backward, saying and unsaying, very evidently contradicts himself? I think he doth. But if this wants any farther confirmation, let the Reader look into his Vindication, and there he will find these contradictions yet in more plain and express terms, if it be possible, which the Reader may find exemplified in the *Animadversions*, p. 178. &c. and thither I refer him, to save the trouble of transcribing.

But the *Dean* for all this, will not allow that he is guilty of a contradiction; and therefore to save himself from that imputation he hath con-



trived two Answers, but they are the most bold and arbitrary, that ever were invented. But when men are hard pressed, it is no wonder that they should make use of any the most desperate shift to make their escape.

Is then, Doth not he who asserts the unity of the Godhead, and yet tells the world, that this is neither a specifick nor a numerical unity (for of a Generical one, there is no question in this case) I say doth not such an one contradict himself? Surely he doth. For if God be one, he must be so in either of these two senses. And therefore if the Godhead be one, and yet is neither numerically nor specifically such, it must be one, and not one, which is a contradiction.

He answers no, because there is an unity that is a medium between both. The unity of the Godhead, is not such as is to be found in a *singular nature*: that is, saith he, *Sabellianism*, neither is it a *specifick unity*, for that is only a Logical and notional unity, and *therefore the unity of the divine nature is not to be confined to this*, p. 19. *In opposition to the Arians the Fathers taught, not one singular substance in God, which is Sabellianism. But such an oneness of substance as we know not how otherwise to express, than by a specifick sameness and unity, tho that doth not answer the complete notion of the Divine unity*, p. 33. In short, the

the Divine nature is one, but by what kind of unity no man can divine. It is neither a specific, nor a numerical oneness, but an unity either made up of both, or made up of neither; however it is a medium between them. I fancy such another medium, as he found who desired the people to join with him in singing the *Psalms*, that was between the three and twentieth, and the twenty fourth *Psalms*. But if this Answer will not bring him off, he hath contrived a second, *viz.* that these three numerical substances are united into one, by a *mutual self-consciousness*. But for this notion of his the *Animadverter* hath sufficiently accounted with him: and therefore there remains nothing more by me to be said upon that Head.

Thus it is plain that the *Dean* in his writings is guilty of many gross and palpable contradictions, which way of writing is very scandalous, and ought therefore by every one to be condemned. But this is not all; there are several other things in his way & manner of writing, which ought to be discountenanced: I can but just name them. Any man that peruses his late writings, will besides his contradictions, find in the 2<sup>d</sup> place, that he frequently, but very fraudulently, endeavors to impose upon his Readers, by making two words to be *equipollent*, which yet have

a *different signification*. Thus in order to amuse unwary Readers, when he speaks of the divine nature, he joins the words *singular and solitary* together, as if they were synonymous terms; and then insidiously asks, p. 17. *Is it not Sabellianism to affirm that there is but one singular and solitary nature in the Trinity?* Answer, To affirm that there is but one *solitary nature*, is to revive the Heresy of *Sabellius*; because it were as much as to say, that the divine nature or substance is to be found only in, and therefore confined to one Person. But to say there is but one *singular nature* imports no such thing. For the same singular numerical nature is to be found in each of the divine Persons, being common to them all, but yet without multiplication, as he hath often bin told by his Adversary, and which thing he hath often affirmed himself; how sincerely let others judge.

So again, in order to establish a plurality of substances, he makes *three substantial persons*, to be the same with *three personal substances*. But he hath bin often told, that tho the persons are different, each of which is a substance; yet that the substance or nature is not distinct, but common to all three. And therefore three substantial Persons, are no more three substances, than three divine Almighty Persons, have three distinct

distinct Divinities or Almightynesses; which he himself sometimes will not allow.

3dly, When hard pressed by his Adversary, to defend himself, he invents several *arbitrary and incomprehensible distinctions*, for which he hath neither reason nor example. Thus when told that three substances, must infer a multiplication of the divine nature in the Trinity, & that again must infer three Gods: to avoid the force of this Argument, he tells us, that the same *Individual nature subsists thrice, not by multiplying but by repeating its self, and that the divine nature is repeated in its Image, but without multiplication*. And this senseless distinction he often repeats in *his defence*; by which it is certain that he multiplies words, tho perhaps he may think that he doth not multiply distinctions. Again, having denied a *Numerical Unity* of the Godhead, and yet being aware, that a *Specificical Unity* would lay him open to many unanswerable difficulties; he hath in a most presumptuous, unprecedented manner, formed a distinction as to Identity and sameness of nature, by which he makes a middle sort of Unity between the two former, partly specifick, and partly numerical. Which distinction is perfectly an Original, and for which he hath neither copy, nor precedent, from any writer either living or dead.

*Lastly*, In the same insidious manner, to avoid the force of those Arguments which are brought against him; when he cannot maintain his *words*, he flies to his *meaning*, where he entrenches himself, and then he is as safe as if he were in an *enchanted Castle*. And there let him continue for me, unmolested and undisturb'd, provided that he will no longer disturb the world, with so unjustifiable a practice; for if men may be allowed by a *mental reservation* to harbor a meaning different from the plain, obvious and natural signification of words, then there is an end of all truth and sincerity, and consequently of all mutual confidence between man and man, which by *this means*, or such *meaning*, if you please, is entirely destroyed.

By all that hath bin said upon this Head, I think it will appear plain to every unprejudiced person, that there was great reason to condemn the *Propositions* mentioned in the *Decree*, which plainly overthrow the Unity of the Godhead; and therefore are justly styled *false, and impious*. Of them it is farther affirmed in the *Decree*, that they are *contrary to the Doctrine of the Catholick Church; and particularly to that received here in the Church of England*. And so they are, as opposite to it, as truth is to falsehood, and faith to infidelity. It hath bin the belief and profession of



of all good Christians, since the first planting of Christianity in the world, that as there is but one God, so there is but one nature and essence in the three persons of the Trinity, of which they are all partakers. This was upon a particular occasion Decreed in the *Council of Nice*, confirmed afterwards by all the other *General Councils*; and they who have opposed this determination have in all times heretofore bin adjudged and declared Hereticks.

For some time indeed, the words *Substance*, *Person*, and *Hypostasis*, were of ambiguous signification, but that was afterwards settled; and the Language of the Church, ever since hath bin *Three persons*, and but one *Substance*, *Nature*, *Essence*, *Divinity*. In this all the Fathers agree, both Greek and Latin, even St. *Hilary*, who styles the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three substances, yet in the very same place where he is cited by the Examiner, he explains himself, and vindicates the Synod of *Antioch*, and tells us p. 37. *Tres substantias esse dixerunt, subsistentium personas per substantias edocentes*; by three substances they meant three persons. But as to the substance it self when placed in opposition to person, he acknowledges that to be but one; and that the Father and son, *unius recte ambo creduntur esse essentiae*. Again: *Credamus & dicamus esse unum substan-*

*substantiam*. p. 39. and p. 40. *Deus unus, ob indiscretæ in utroque naturæ indiffimilem substantiam prædicetur*. Which the *Examiner* thus renders into English: *The Father who begets, and the Son who is born, are to be acknowledged one God, upon the account of the same nature in both, without the least difference or variation; and therefore, say I, without the least distinction: except the Dean can find out a distinction without a difference, which I confess he hath done in some other cases before mentioned. But this is his peculiar talent, to find out that which no body before him ever dreamed of.*

The like observation is to be made with relation to the *Alexandrian Synod* under *Athanasius*; which one would think he would never have mentioned, if he had not in a manner bin forsaken by his reason, at the same time that he abandoned his Religion. For nothing could have bin produced, which is more apposite and pertinent, to overthrow his new notion of *three minds and substances*. For there happened a dispute between the Catholics, concerning *μία ὑπόστασις* and *τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις*, which was merely a contention about words, when they all agreed in the same thing; those who asserted *three Hypostases*, thereby meaning three Persons, but yet but one Godhead, and one substance in the Trinity;

nity; those who denied there were three *Hypostases*, thought that by *Hypostasis* was meant substance, and they dreaded nothing more, than to affirm there were three substances in the God-head.

Take it in the words of the *Examiner*, p. 43. *They owned but one Hypostasis or substance, for they believed but one Divinity or Divine nature, by reason of the Identity of nature, between Father and Son. And they having given their several Explications, were all found to agree in the Catholick Faith; and then afterwards three Hypostases and one nature was the Catholick Language.* Can any thing be more directly opposite to his notion, than this Determination of the Synod. One cannot but think he was Infatuated when he produced it. But still he hath a shift in reserve to save himself and his three substances. For in that same place, he renders *Hypostasis* by substance, and saith, that when they said *three Hypostases*, they meant it *still in the notion of three substances.* A very false and perfidious suggestion; making the Catholick Language, as he himself acknowledges it, wherein Catholicks expressed their consent in the same Faith, to consist in a ridiculous contradiction. For according to him, when they said, *three Hypostases* and one nature, they meant *three sub-*

*stances, and one nature ; that is, three substances, and one substance ; three natures, and one nature; these being two words that signify but one and the same thing.*

But the true Language of the Church was, that there are *three Persons*, truly and really distinct, and yet but *one nature, essence, substance*. And this doctrine hath bin constantly, uniformly, and without any alteration conveyed thro all the Ages of the Church to our days; this being the Faith, and these the words, of all Christian Churches, *Greek and Latin, Eastern and Western*, that are at this day in the World. And particularly of our own Church, who in the first Article of our Religion teaches us to profess, *that there is but one God ; and that in the Unity of this Godhead, there are three Persons, of one power, substance, and eternity*. And in our most solemn addrestes to Heaven, she directs us to make the same acknowledgment, *viz. upon Trinity Sunday ; and to give glory to God in these words: Who art one God, one Lord, not one only Person, but three Persons in one substance. For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality*. And if there be not any *difference* in the substance, there can be no *distinction*, as was said before.

And

And now at length being quite tired with following this *Examiner*, thro that maze and Labyrinth, into which he commonly leads his Readers: it is high time I should take leave of him, after I have committed him to the mercy of God, and his writings to the censure of the Church. The former I hope he will partake of; the latter perhaps he and they may escape, tho he stands in great need of it, especially since he so obstinately and pertinaciously persists in his errors, after so plain a discovery, and so clear a confutation of them.

But I cannot fairly part with him, without enquiring into the reasons, which induced him to publish this Paper, wherein he treats the Governors of the University, in so rude and insolent a manner; falling foul upon persons, whose Character, Profession, and Station he ought to have considered; and from whom he never received the least personal injury or provocation, that ever I could yet hear of. Among other Reasons, he hath suggested one in the last page of this Book, which I shall only take notice of, viz. *That it was impossible for him to do otherwise than he hath done, unless he would be content to be trampled upon by every Scribler.* Now this is a reason, I think,



think, that is wholly owing to his Guilt, and some unreasonable fears which are consequent thereupon. Sure he is conscious to himself that his credit runs low, and that he is much fallen in the esteem of many who formerly had a good opinion of him. He is sensible that his Adversary hath foiled him, which some perhaps may call *running him down*; and now he is afraid that the by-standers should trample upon him.

What persons who are abroad may do, I cannot tell; but as for the members whether *scriblers or no scriblers* of the University, notwithstanding this *Humiliation*, I am apt to think that they never intended to insult over him, especially if he had not published this insolent Paper. But this phrase of treading and *trampling*, brings to my mind the story that *Socrates* tells of that famous Rhetorician *Ecebolius*; a man much talked of in the days in which he lived, and who by his levity and inconstancy in the profession of Religion, hath given occasion to be much talked of ever since. This man, τοῖς ἡγετοῖς τῶν βασιλείων ἐπαύωτο, accommodating himself, as the Historian tells us, *Socr. Hist. Eccl. Lib. 3. cap. 13.* to the manners and inclinations of the Emperors under whom he lived, in *Constantius's* time was a zealous Christian,

stian, but an *Arian*, as *Baronius* thinks, under *Julian's* Reign he turned *Apostate*, and proved a violent Pagan. But after his death, he was desirous to embrace once again the Christian Religion, and to be admitted into the society and communion of the Faithful. But being sensible that his prevarications had rendered him unworthy of that favor, he made use of this notable stratagem, to move the compassion of Christians: He laies himself prostrate before the doors of the Church, and bespeaks those who were entering into it, in those emphatical words, *conculcate me*, *ἀλάς ἀνάφθιτος*, *salem insipidum infatuatum*, good Christian people, tread me under your feet, trample upon me, a Lump, a heap of Salt, which hath lost its savor.

Now that which I have to add farther upon occasion of this story, is only this, in relation to the Members of the *University*; for whom, I think, I durst undertake, that if any of them should happen to find, I will not say the *Dean*, but any tho a much inferior Person to Mr. *Dean*, in the same humble penitent posture, begging pardon for any the like publick offence and scandal, that he might either by word or deed have given the Church: I dare be confident, I say, there is no Member of the *University* would insult over the misfortunes of such a penitent. They would rather

ther on the other side lend him a helping hand, and would lift him up: they would comfort him, and give him good words, and bid him hope for Gods mercy, and the Church's pardon upon the condition of a sincere repentance. But I am apt to think likewise, they would add counsel to their consolations, and would give him good advice into the bargain. They would advise him to be steady for the future in the practice of his duty; and by no means to play fast and loose with the Faith, or to be guilty of any the least prevarication in the affairs of Religion. And in short, I presume they would dismiss him with those words of our Savior, *Jo. 5. 14. Go and Sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

*Reluct Oct. 3. 701.*

*F I N I S.*

